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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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R 180808Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0879
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OSLO 5640

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR,OTRA,SV,NO,SU
SUBJECT: STORTING DEBATE ON SVALBARD SHOWS CLEAR DETERMINATION
TO ASSERT NORWEGIAN CONTROL

REF: OSLO 5348

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SUMMARY: STORTING CONCLUDED SVALBARD POLICY DEBATE
DEC 15 WITH UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE
ADDITIONAL STEPS TO INSURE NORWEGIAN CONTROL OVER
SVALBARD. PARLIAMENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHILE CON-
CERNED OVER USSR'S INTERESTS,SOVIETS SHOULD BE HANDLED
THROUGH EQUAL TREATMENT PROVISIONS OF SVALBARD TREATY
AND NOT THROUGH ANY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP. GOVERNMENT
NOW IS TASKED WITH PUTTING STORTING'S CLEAR AND FIRM
GUIDANCE INTO PRACTICAL,CONCRETE POLICY ADMINISTRA-
TIVE MEASURES.
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END SUMMARY

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1. STORTING DEBATE ON NORWAY'S SVALBARD POLICY DEC 15
EVOKED UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR TAKING ADDITIONAL CONCRETE
STEPS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT NORWAY INTENDS TO ASSERT
ITS CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ISLAND GROUP.
ALL PARTIES,FROM RIGHT TO LEFT,CALLED FOR GOVERN-
MENT TO TAKE MEASURES NECESSARY TO MAKE SURE THAT
NORWAY'S CONTROL OF ISLANDS IS IMPLEMENTED AND RES-
PECTED. THIS WAS FIRST FULL-SCALE DEBATE ON SVALBARD
POLICY SINCE NORWAY ASSUMED SOVEREIGNTY SOME 50 YEARS
AGO AND CLIMAXED 11-MONTH CONSIDERATION BY NORWEGIANYB
OF POLICY TOWARD THEIR NORTHERN ARCHIPELAGO.

2. IN OPENING THE DEVATE OTTO LYNG(CONSERVATIVE)
REFERRED TO STORTING FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOM-
MENDATIONS CALLING FOR STRONGER ASSERTION OF AUTHORITY
OVER SVALBARD(REFTEL) SAYING THAT SELDOM HAD COMMITTEE
EXPRESSED ITSELF SO STRONGLY AND UNANIMOUSLY. HE
NOTED NORWAY'S PASSIVE APPROACH TO ITS RESPONSIBILITY
IN PAST AND SOVIET COMMUNITY'S UNWILLINGNESS TO
RECOGNIZE NUMEROUS NORWEGIAN REGULATIONS, AND HE
STATED "WE MUST ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PAST LAXITY
AND FOR THE TASKS THAT LIE AHEAD." OTHER SPEAKERS
POINTED TO INEFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SVALBARD
AND QUESTIONED NORWAY'S CREDIBILITY AS ADMINISTERING
POWER.

3. FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TOR OFTEDAL
ATTRIBUTED STRONG INDEPENDENT SOVIET ADMINISTRATION
TO LAXITY IN NORWEGIAN CONTROL. HE SAID BETTER
NORWEGIAN ADMINISTRATION IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT
PROBLEMS WHICH COULD ARISE IF OTHER PARTIES SHOULD
ASK FOR SAME TREATMENT AS SOVIETS. "THE PRESENT SYSTEM
HAS WORKED WELL WITH ONLY TWO NATIONS ON SVALBARD,
BUT COULD LEAD TO CHAOS WHEN OR IF MORE COUNTRIES
WERE INVOLVED," HE SAID. FOREIGN MINISTER KNUT FRYDENLUND
PICKED UP THIS THEME AND STATED HE THOUGH IT CERTAIN
THE GOVERNMENT'S EARLIER SVALBARD REPORT,THE STORTING
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND ITS PLENARY DEBATE
WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR TO NORWEGIANS AND TREATY PARTIES
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THAT NORWAY INTENDS TO PURSUE RESPONSIBLE POLICIES
ON SVALBARD.

4. SPEAKER AFTER SPEAKER ECHOED THESE VIEWS AND
CALLED FOR CONCRETE ACTION TO PROVIDE SVALBARD GOVERNOR
WITH HELICOPTER FOR SURVEILLANCE, TO EXPAND AND
INPROVE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND ADMINISTRATION,TO BROADEN
AND STRENGTHEN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE

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MACHINERY,TO BETTER POST AND TELEGRAPHIC SERVICES,
RESIDENT'S SOCIAL AND WORK CONDITIONS AND HOUSING
AND TO DIVERSIFY AND SUPPORT NORWEGIAN INDUSTRY
THERE.

5. COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER LORENTZEN ANNOUNCED THAT
FROM THE NEW YEAR TELEPHONE RATES TO SVALBARD WOULD
BE REDUCED AND POSTAL SERVICES IMPROVED. IN RESPONSE
TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT LOW TAXES PAID BY SOVIET
CITIZENS ON SVALBARD JUSTICE MINISTER VALLE SAID TAX
RATES WOULD BE REVIEWED IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLE
OF EQUAL TREATMENT OF ALL NATIONALITIES. VALLE ALSO
SAID THAT GOVERNMENT AGREED WITH STORTING PROPOSALS
FOR GIVING GREATER STRENGTH AND STATURE TO CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE AND COORDINATING MACHINERY
FOR SVALBARD. ONE MEASURE NOW BEING CONSIDERED
WAS STRENGTHENING AND UPGRADING OF EXISTING POLAR COMMITTEE
SECRETARIAT FOR THIS PURPOSE.

6. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND INTERVENED TO LAY OUT
FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS. HE DEFINED NORWAY'S THREE
TASKS ON SVALBARD AS THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIETS
ON BARENTS SEA CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY,THE STATUS
OF SVALBARD CONTINENTAL SHELF, AND THE ISSUE OF POLICY
FOR SVALBARD GENERALLY. HE AGREED WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE'S CONCERN THAT NORWAY'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER
SVALBARD WHOULD NOT BE QUESTIONED AND THAT NORWEGIAN
SOVEREIGNTY WAS IN INTEREST OF ALL COUNTRIES AND TO
PEACE IN AREA. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SVALBARD TREATY
PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL TREATMENT OF ALL TREATY PARTIES WAS
CENTRAL FEATURE OF NORWAY'S POLICY BUT STATED THAT
EQUAL TREATMENT APPLIED ONLY TO TYPE OF ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY MENTIONED IN THE TREATY, AND THA INCREASING
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IMPORTANCE OF SVALBARD AREA MADE CONSCIENTIOUS
MAINTENANCE OF EQUAL TREATMENT PRINCIPLE MORE ESSENTIAL
THAN BEFORE. HE ALSO STATED THAT AN OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE
OF NORWAY'S POLICY WAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO HARMONIOUS
DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH WHILE AVOIDING TENSION AND
CONFLICTS.

7. FRYDENLUND SAID STRENGTHENING LOCAL ADMINISTRA-
TION OF SVALBARD WAS NORWAY'S OBLIGATION UNDER TREATY
AND VALUABLE INTERNATIONALLY TO CREATE THE TRUST AND
CONFIDENCE NEEDED TO PRESERVE PEACE IN AREA.

8. POINTING OUT THAT SOVIETS HAD NOT ACCEPTED A
NUMBER OF NORWEGIAN ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES ON SVAL-
BARD, HE SAID THERE WAS NO REASON TO CONCEAL CONSIDERABLE

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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R 180808Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0880
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 OSLO 5640

DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN NORWAY AND USSR OVER INTERPRETA-
TION OF TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. BUT HE ADDED NORWAY WOULD
CONTINUE TO SEEK RESOLUTION OF DISAGREEMENTS IN MUTUAL
INTEREST OF PARTIES WHILE STRICTLY OBSERVING THE
TREATY'S PROVISIONS.

9. ON RESOURCE POLICY,FRYDENLUND SAID NORWAY MUST
PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY USING ITS OWN INTERESTS AS THE
PRIMARY GUIDE WHILE GIVING ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO
CONCERNS OF OTHERS. NORWAY WOULD EXPECT OTHER COUNTRIES
TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF NORWAY'S INTERESTS AS WELL. IN
THIS REGARD HE SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO CLARIFY
JURISDICTIONAL QUESTIONS TO REDUCE POTENTIAL CONFLICTS
AND TO FOSTER COOPERATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
IN REGION.
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10. COMMENT: STORTING DEBATE BRINGS TO CLIMAX NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT'S YEAR-LONG CONSIDERATION OF SVALBARD POLICY. THE FIRMNESS AND UNANIMITY WITH WHICH ENTIRE STORTING SET FORTH ITS VIEW ON NEED FOR MORE CONCERNED AND ACTIVE NATIONAL SVALBARD POLICY HAS HEIGHTENED PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INTEREST AND HAS GIVEN GOVERNMENT A SOLID FOUNDATION UPON WHICH IT CAN BUILD AND IMPLEMENT SUCH POLICY. ANY WEAKNESS OR OPPOSTION COULD HAVE BEEN VIEWED BOTH IN NORWAY AND OUT AS A POTENTIAL LACK OF RESOLVE WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED.

11. A CENTRAL THEME THROUGHOUT DEBATE WAS POSITION OF USSR. ITS PROMINENT PRESENCE ON SVALBARD AND IN THE SURROUNDING AREA AND ITS OBJECTION TO MANY NORWEGIAN ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES. STORTING EVIDENCED CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET REACTIONS,BUT MAD IT CLEAR IT EXPECTED GOVERNMENT TO STAND UP TO SOVIETS AS FAR AS NORWAY'S TREATY OBLIGATIONS WERE CONCERNED. MOST SPEAKERS COUCHED THEIR STAND ON THE PROVISION FOR EQUAL TREATMENT,WHICH THEY ARGUED WAS ROOTED IN THE TREATY AND WAS IN THE SOVIET'S OWN INTEREST SHOULD OTHER COUNTRIES ESTABLISH THEMSELVES MORE PERMANENTLY ON THE ISLONDS.

12. WHILE APPRECIATING THIS FIRM SUPPORT VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS,SOME SOURCES,INCLUDING THOSE IN THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF,WILL WANT TO CONTINUE TO EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION TOWARD THE SOVIETS ON SVALBARD. THEY NOTE THAT THE YEAR'S SVALBARD POLICY CONSIDERATION HAS GENERATED SOME HIGH-BLOWN NATIONALISTIC RHETORIC FROM NORWAY AND ONLY SILENCE FROM THE USSR. THEY WONDER HOW FIRM THE RESOLVE OF THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WOULD BE IF SUDDENLY THE SOVIET BEAR BEGAN TO GROWL.

13. AT THIS STAGE,HOWEVER,NEXT STEP WILL BE FOR GOVERNMENT TO PUT ITS POLICY PROPOSALS AND THE STORTING'S BACKING INTO MORE DETAILED AND CONCRETE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES. PLANS ARE NOW TO BEGIN THAT PROCESS EARLY NEXT YEAR WITH A VIEW TO PUTTING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BEFORE STORTING IN ITS SPRING SESSION.
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